

**Mono Lake Shoulder Widening 09-26990_
Project Development Team Meeting
December 11, 2002**

Self-introductions took place and the following people were in attendance: Brad Mettam, Project Manager; Tim Shultz, former Project Manager; Juan Torres, Environmental; Craig Roecker, Mono Lake Committee; Mike Donahue, Environmental; Larry Johnson, Mono County; John Knott, State Parks; Ken Anderson, State Parks; Sarah Adams, Mono Inn; Roger Porter, Forest Service; Bart Godett, Design; Bart dela Cruz, Design; Andrew Brandt, Hydraulics; R. Steve Miller, Landscape Architecture; Tim Hansen, Friends of Mono Lake..

Tim Shultz introduced the new Project Manager, Brad Mettam. Brad asked the group to assist by reminding him where commitments have been made, so that the transition does not impact those commitments.

Purpose of Meeting: The primary purpose of this meeting was to present the newly developed Alternative 2 to the group.

Review of Alternative 2:

After a recapitulation of the history of the project, including programmed amount of \$10 million and a current unescalated estimate of \$12.4 million (all Regional Transportation Improvement Program funds) and the current estimated construction date of summer of 2006, the new alternative was described.

Mike described the new alternative. The project was divided into ten segments to make description of the differences between the alternatives easier to understand. This alternative both minimizes impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and to riparian environment. This alternative would be a build alternative in the environmental document. All the west side would have 8' shoulder. The difficulty is on the east side. In this alternative, 87% of the project could have 8' shoulders, with three sections where east side shoulders would remain 3-4'. The environmental unit took the information developed in field reviews concerning areas that stakeholders wanted to avoid, and developed an alternative that accomplishes this as much as possible. This required certain trade-offs, including some short walls (approx. 4-6') on the west side.

The group asked who makes the decision concerning selection of an alternative. Mike responded that the draft environmental document would not make a recommendation. Following the public comment period and a review of those comments, the PDT would make a recommendation to Caltrans. At that point, prior to the issuance of the final document, a preferred alternative would be selected, with final determination made jointly by the Local Transportation Commission and Caltrans District 9 Director Tom Hallenbeck.

Bart went through the sections, describing key differences between the two alternatives:

- Section 1: Alternative 1 corrects one small area where 8' shoulders were not attained. Alternative 2 does not include this correction.
- Section 2: Alternative 1 has a turn lanes into the Marina, with full shoulders. Alternative 2 does not include the turn lanes or wide shoulders north of the Marina, with about 200 meters of shoulder on the east side that is 4' in width. Alternative 2 would not realign, and would use a slope treatment instead of a rockfall storage area.
- Section 3: There will be less fill slope on the east side in alternative 2 than in alternative 1. Curves will be designed to current standards in both alternatives. Alternative 2 would use a slope treatment instead of a rockfall storage area.
- Section 4: Alternative 2 will have approximately 300 meters of shoulders that are not 8' wide.

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- Section 5: Alternative 1 includes the potential for a pullout on the west side. Both alternatives include a wall on the west side just north of Tioga Lodge. Both have 8' shoulders throughout.
- Section 6: Curves will be designed to current standards. Both alternatives will have 8' shoulders throughout. Both alternatives have common issues of sight distance and access points at Peigne Curve.
- Section 7: Both alternatives are the same.
- Section 8: Both alternatives are the same.
- Section 9: In both alternatives, walls will be used at the toe of the east side fill slope to balance wetland take to no net loss. Alternative 2 will have two areas without 8' shoulders.
- Section 10: Both alternatives are the same.

Questions and Comments:

In response to concerns raised by Sarah about the new vista at Cemetery Rd. and its impacts on adjacent properties, the group discussed potential arrangements at length. The consensus of the group was that it was not necessary to eliminate that vista.

Rodger Porter (USFS) considered the potential visual impacts as key. The discussions concerning slopes, netting, and walls, especially if the west side walls can be designed to blend in, were favorable. The "devil is in the details", however.

John Knott and Ken Anderson (State Parks) liked the addition of alternative 2. They are interested in how it gets treated in the final document.

Craig Roecker (Mono Lake Committee) was pleased by some portions, but not by others. They are concerned about guarantees on revegetation.

Tim Hansen (Friends of Mono Lake) likes alternative 1. Would prefer fill slopes rather than walls.

Larry Johnston (Mono County Planning) likes the direction taken in Alternative 2. Would like to have more specifics, and is concerned about how Peigne Curve is treated.

Document Schedule:

A draft should be ready for FHWA to review in January. Pending the length of their review, the schedule is for release of the draft for public review in March.